(b) to (d) in view of (a) above there is no proposal to reserve any industry for any particular State. Fiscal and other incentives have been provided to certain industries in the North-East.

Sick Industrial Units in North India

†4409 SHRI MANOHAR KANT DHYANI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of public and private sector industrial units are sick in north India;

(b) whether Government have conducted any study taking this situation into account;

(c) whether Government are making efforts to revive the sick units in the interest of the country and society;

(d) if so, by when; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (e) Data on sick industrial units, assisted by banks in the country, is compiled by the Reserved Bank of India (RBI). According to the RBI, the number of non-SSI sick/weak industrial units in public and private sector in north India (comprising Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and the union territories of Delhi and Chandigarh) as at the end of March 1999 (provisional), was 45 and 511 respectively.

The Government has taken a number of steps for revival of sick industrial units which, *interalia,* include guidelines of Reserve Bank of India to banks, amalgamation of sick units with healthy units, setting up of Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) under the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act 1985, National Equity Fund etc.

Removal of Quantitative Restrictions on Import

4410 SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have removed quantitative restrictions (QRs) on import of as many as 714 items;

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(b) what is the nature of these items;

(c) what criteria have been adopted in selection of these items;

(d) what will be the duty-structure in respect of these items;

(e) how this removal of import restrictions is likely to effect the farmers and indigenous producers; and

(f) what steps are contemplated to project their interests?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (f) In view of India's international commitments, import restrictions on 714 items were removed on 31-03-2000. Out of these 714 items, 230 are agricultural items 47 are textile items and 437 are other industrial products. These items are part of 2714 items, notified to WTO in 1997, restrictions on which were being maintained on account of balance of payment reasons. The identification of 510 items was made in consultation with the concerned administrative departments of Government of India. The restrictions on other 204 items were removed in terms of our Agreements with European Union, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan signed in 1997.

Imports of most of these items attract the peak Customs duty rate of 35%. The details of duty structure are available in the Finance Bill, 2000-2001, presented before the Parliament.

All imports in the country are subject to applicable rates of customs duties and also subjects to domestic laws, rules, orders, regulations, technicals pecifications and environmental safety norms as applicable on domestically produced goods. This should provide adequate protection to the domestic industry.

The imports are being closely monitored and government would strive to ensure through appropriate use of tariff mechanism that imports do not cause any serious detriment or injury to the domestic industry.

Trade Deficit

4411. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleasded to state:

(a) whether India's trade deficit for the last financial year has widened;

(b) if so, the reasons and factors responsible for the same; and